

Filiberto Rayero

MSGUnitz/bm, Support Br., CD/00

2270

Case 42,315

13 Apr 65

RETURN TO CIA
Background Use Only
Do Not Reproduce

DO/OS 03
John Sherwood
WB/C/FI
CIA HQs

This is on your old case on
Filiberto Ray.

(11)

VBR

14-00000
IA-294-65

7 April 1965

file

SUBJECT: Cuban Exile Activities in the US -- Election of
Government of/in Exile

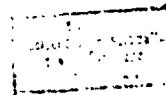
REF. : (a) Case 42315
(b) Miscellaneous Contributions of Filiberto Rivero

1. The following, and the enclosure, presumably are of
interest to [John Sherwood, WH Division, et al.]

③ 2. The enclosure, for retention, is the edited results of
a meeting during the late evening and the early morning of 24-25
Mar 65 between [Joe DeVanon] of the LAFO and Fil Rivero. The latter
must be a familiar name to those involved in Cuban activities. The
meeting was taped, transcribed and edited, all of which took much
more time than had been anticipated; ergo, the delay.

3. In resume, enclosure reports the background of various
attempts, or opportunities missed, to overthrow the Castro regime,
Rivero's opinions of why they failed, and his intention of
initiating a final try. On the basis of encouraging responses
to a couple of spot radio announcements in Los Angeles and similar
experiences in Miami and New York, he has plans to poll all Cuban
exiles in Southern California in a rather well thought out election
on Sunday, 25 Apr 65. Qualified voters will select some 20 or so
anti-Castro Cubans from possibly 100 eligibles who, in essence,
will represent the Cubans in exile and, when politic, a government
in exile. The enclosure sets out the mechanics of the election,
anticipated activities of the representatives in the US and in
Latin American countries, the formation of Cuban-Latin brigades,
training facilities, and invasion preparations.

4. Since preparation of the above, Rivero advised on 7 Apr 65
that Prio has proposed an alternate plan for elections on 2 May
of a group of 25 people to be chosen from a pre-selected 50. There
will be 16 nominees of political or revolutionary background from
which eight will be elected; 10 from the "new generation" - 5 will
be chosen; 3 from 6 industry-commerce nominees; and the same number
from labor, the professions and the press. The man with the greatest
number of votes will be the "Delegate" of the exiles, patterned
somewhat on Jose Marti's "delegate" status prior to the Spanish
American War. The remaining 24 will be his committee.



218R

LA-294-65

7 April 1965

5. Rivero regards the above as one more Prio device to assure himself effective control of the exile movement's operations, and the election a dishonest affair in that voters really have no choice.

6. Rivero, despite Prio's plans, is going ahead with his own 25 April balloting. He has since, with the help of former Cuban jurists, modified as follows the plan as presented in enclosure.

a. Each of the Caribbean Governments willing to assist in providing facilities (when the operation gets to that point) will be invited to provide a delegate who with the other Caribbean representatives will constitute a Council of the Caribbean to sit with the exiles' junta. In addition to being the focal points for liaison, they will also have power to veto exile activity they believe not to be in the best interests of the Caribbean. Appeal would be through QAS for resolution.

b. If and when the exiles invaded Cuba, the junta and the Council would together oversee a provisional government until a constitutional assembly could create a formal government.

7. Rivero is discouraged by Prio's plans as well as by what he suspects are efforts by elements of the US Government to keep the exiles divided and to make impossible any organization remotely resembling a government in exile or even - of exiles. It is his intent, at least at the moment, to criticize Prio's plans in his next radio program.

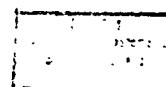
8. In the event interested parties might prefer to hear the tape in addition to the edited transcript attached, we will forward it.

- end -

Encl: Transcription of Tape by Fil Rivero

- 2 -

CIA USE ONLY



14-00000
Enclosure to
IA-294-65
5 April 1965

1. For your information, I am Filiberto Rivero. I am a citizen of Cuba by birth; born 29 Aug 1913, and a permanent resident of the US since 1949. I am married to an American, have an American daughter, and I've lived in California practically since I arrived in the US, except for two or three short visits to Cuba prior to 1959. At present I have no political affiliations either in Cuba or elsewhere, and I do not belong to any organizations whatsoever. For a time, however, I was President of the Cuban Catholic Center in Los Angeles, an archdiocesan organization created to provide Cuban refugees with a place to meet, and help each other find jobs, etc.

2. About four years ago I started a lecture tour, prompted by people like the Kiwanis, Chambers of Commerce, etc., to try to explain the Cuban situation. For the last two years I have had a radio program on Station KWW, Pasadena, Sundays, 1900-1930. It's a sort of newscast of Latin America called "Nuestra America al Dia", or "Our America to Date". In that program I do a kind of resume of the important events of the week in Latin America, concentrating on Cuba. Cuba is in the headlines much of the time, legitimately is important news and is the source of important news; also I'm extremely interested in the problems of my country. I should also say that I am a strong believer in the American system of government and wish that my little country could have done as well, i.e., had a two-party system with elections every four years, after which they would bury the political hatchets and go to work. But it hasn't worked out like that. I have strong views on some points of American politics. If I was a Republican I would be a Liberal Republican; if I was a Democrat I would be a Conservative Democrat. That's as close as I can describe my political thinking. One final thing, I have never been in jail and I've never been in any trouble.

3. Now with that little background I should add that I have been the only radio or TV voice in Los Angeles attempting to explain the ups and downs of Latin American politics and this has given me a bit of recognition. Also since October 1964 on Monday nights, from 2100 to 2400, I have had a program with a Mexican, Roberto Iglesias, who is an American citizen by convenience, in my opinion, that is, and not by conviction, although we are friends. We started a program of telephone conversations in which people would call and comment on any subject on politics -- national, local, or Latin American -- as they pleased. This program, which is also on KWW, has enjoyed a fantastic and unexpected success, and it brought me to some additional

CONFIDENTIAL

14-00000
Enclosure to
LA-244-65
5 April 1965

prominence in the Latin community of Los Angeles. I might say it has also made me a center of controversy. I've taken some strong swipes at the Mexican Government because it did not go along with the rest of America in breaking relations with Castro. By the same token, I have also taken some rather strong swipes at certain areas of the American Government for things done in Latin America that I feel were grave mistakes.

4. I consulted beforehand, however, with a number of people on a personal basis to know if I had the right to discuss American politics, since I am not an American citizen. I was told that this was a free country, and that as long as I didn't violate any laws of the country I could speak on anything I pleased, and that it would be judged in regard to good taste, or bad taste; but not that I was doing anything illegal. So, being respectful of American laws, I've taken advantage of the fact that I live in a free country, one I like very much, because I think I'm doing some good.

5. With reference to the Mexican community, in general, it's a matter of orienting a million and a half people who were born with a hatred of the US. Most of those that come here from Mexico have been brought up with a deep-seated resentment against the Yankee. Our program has shown this to be tremendously strong and I make a special effort to tell them that the cause of their woes is not the Yankee; it's their own lack of education because their government for many years has kept them in a kind of an intellectual serfdom. So, I'm not popular with many Mexicans, who accept whatever their government says is good for them. I argue that you do not accept the word of the government as the word of God; that you discuss and argue with your government if you don't agree, and that is what keeps the administration on its toes. This is not the way it works in Mexico which is not a democracy, but a kind of a civilian monarchy in which the monarch or the king changes every six years, but the monarchy reigns on, that is, the Partido Revolucionario Institucional, the PRI. So much for Mexico.

6. Now, regarding Cuba. The reason I wanted to have a chat with you is because there is something imminent as far as Los Angeles is concerned, and due to our friendly relations I want to inform you beforehand so that you would know from me and not from the press. I refer to the fact that we're trying to create what will amount to a Cuban Government in exile. This is not news because it has been going on for about three or four months, but what is important is that I have jumped the gun on the leaders in Miami, and am scheduling

14-00000
Enclosure to
IA-234-65
5 April 1965

an election without their particular approval, but without their specific disapproval either. They have asked me to wait and talk to Dr. Prio and the other leaders in Miami who are working on this, but I refuse to delay any longer.

7. First, let's answer one question -- why a government in exile? Well, everything else seems to have failed. Since the Castro takeover in Cuba the first big thing I can remember was the Bay of Pigs. Well, that story is pretty well known. The reasons why the Bay of Pigs failed I think were covered beautifully in an article by a Cuban attorney entitled, "Decision for Disaster: At Last The Truth About The Bay of Pigs," in Reader's Digest for September 1964. Up to now this has been the most complete and factual article I have read on the Bay of Pigs. I have double-checked with many Cubans who were involved and they tell me this account is absolutely accurate, except for one point. It does not say why the Kennedy administration cut down the second and third waves that were originally scheduled. The information I heard from other sources is that there was a very heated argument between Adlai Stevenson and President Kennedy. Stevenson had gone on record that the first wave of bombers that hit Cuba prior to the invasion were flown by defectors from the Cuban Air Force. Apparently he did not know that this was part of the overall CIA operation. When he learned of this, I'm told, he got very, very upset, being a man of great pride, and that in his rather strong argument with President Kennedy about the point, he threatened to reveal the whole plot in front of the world and resign as Ambassador to the United Nations if there were any more such bombings. I understand President Kennedy feared a scandal, and gave the orders that resulted in the Bay of Pigs disaster. I don't know if this is true or not but I put it here because it makes a lot of sense and tends to relieve the American intelligence groups of the blame they've been carrying on their shoulders since the Bay of Pigs invasion, but that's beside the point.

8. The next big moment of Cuban hope of liberation was the October 1962 missile crisis. We all know what happened there, and many of us Cubans feel that the administration made another grave mistake because many very important people in the administration do not understand the mechanics of the Communist mind. At the time in which the so-called eyeball-to-eyeball confrontation came about the Soviets promised to take the missiles out, and to permit some international organization to inspect the island, etc. Of course, the question is -- why did the American Government retreat or lift

14-00000
Enclosure to
IA-2y4-65
5 April 1965

the blockade when the moment of danger had already passed? I understand that many people in Washington and the administration felt that Khrushchev had behaved like a good boy, had promised he would take his missiles out immediately, and dismantle them, and that he should not be pushed into a corner. It was felt that if he was pushed into a corner, possibly the Stalinist group in the USSR, prodded by the Chinese, would overthrow Khrushchev, and then the US would have to deal with a much tougher man and not good old Nikita who wasn't too hard to get along with. All he had done was point a few atomic missiles at our heads. In any event, we Cubans felt that if the blockade had been kept on for another few weeks, or until the inspection had been made, this would have been so brutally shameful to the Castro regime that right then and there, chances were good for an internal uprising while the United Nations or the OAS or the Red Cross was there making its inspection. At any rate, this was a fantastic opportunity that was missed by reasons which perhaps history may be able to take care of. So, that was second thing that failed in the Cuban problem.

9. Then, of course, we can also mention the disaster of Miro Cardona and his group which failed in the opinion of many people because they were practically appointed by the State Department. At least, at that time, the State Department seemed to want some left-wing leaders to take over Cuba. There is no doubt that Cardona could be classified as a Socialist of sorts, or left-winger of sorts. The disaster of Cardona was a result of the Bay of Pigs situation and was a very unpleasant thing. I think personally that Cardona conducted himself wrong. If he had been brought into President Kennedy's confidence, he should have respected that confidence and made a discreet exit, but not the big to-do he made which didn't accomplish anything except to kill the hopes of other Cubans and to make President Kennedy and Robert Kennedy very angry. Anyway, Cardona's group had the original sin of not being a legitimate Cuban organization. Moreover, there is another thing about his group which many Cubans have never forgiven -- that is that at the moment of the invasion they were practically locked up by American authorities someplace in Florida. They were supposed to be allies but were kept prisoners. I suspect the truth of the matter is that the Americans who were running the show feared these Cubans would talk too much and that their being put away for a few hours was just a roughshod way of protecting them against themselves. But this left a bad taste because it proved that the group was nothing but a puppet of the State Department, and Cubans proud of their sovereignty and their nationalism didn't like it at all.

14-00000
Enclosure to
IA-244-65
5 April 1965

10. The next point on the things that have gone wrong in the process of Cuban liberation is the fantastic "operetta", and I say operetta because we could call it a tragic comedy, of Manolo Ray and his meanderings around the Caribbean. I had been in Washington in March 1964 and in Miami in January or February 1964 and I had done a lot of talking, and interviewing, and investigating. When I returned to Los Angeles, about April 19th, I gave a meeting of Cubans a full report of my three-month trip on the referendum preparations going on in Miami, and my conversations in Washington with some State Department people, with Cuban ex-ambassadors who still live in Washington and a tremendous assortment of personalities. During my report, here in Los Angeles, one of the Cuban leaders asked me what I thought about Ray's promise to be in Cuba, fighting by the 20th of May. I told him without any hesitation (and I have a tape of that meeting) that there was nothing to be concerned about or hoped for with Ray because he was going to be on some convenient little island in the Caribbean with a photographer and a few friends and that would be the end of his promise to invade Cuba. But I was promptly abused by a member of the Junta (JURE) because he thought I was desecrating his hero. I told him I didn't have anything against Ray but that I had enough information to warrant my saying that. Of course, when this actually happened just a few weeks later when Ray was discovered on Cay Anguilla, a British possession, I was looked on with great respect by the people at that meeting. My reasoning that Ray was going to be found on an island was just the result of putting a few bits of information together and asking myself why Ray had made the rash promise in 1963 that he would be fighting in Cuba or be killed in the fighting. This was because of his famous, or infamous, scheme known as the Judas plan. The Judas plan to refresh you was one whereby the American Government (when I say government I mean precisely Robert Kennedy and perhaps his brother) was to overthrow Castro just before the elections of 1964. It came to be called the Judas plan because actually it was not meant to change the basic type of government, just to replace Fidel Castro with Manolo Ray. Those of us who studied Ray wondered how much difference there would be in the basic political philosophy of Castro and Ray. I think that we can say, without missing the mark too far that Ray would find a lot of support for this kind of thinking in some circles of the State Department and the American Government. Then I had another reason to think that this Judas plan was real because during my stay in Miami I learned that several top officials of the first nine months of the Castro government, by then refugees themselves, had been contacted by people connected in some way with others supposed to represent the Central Intelligence Agency. These former officials

14-00000
Enclosure to
IA-294-65
5 April 1965

of the first year of the Castro government had been asked if they would consider taking their old positions if and when there was a Cuban government that would be close to the original revolutionary government -- in other words, Ray and his people. This was before the assassination of President Kennedy. After the assassination, which was in November 1963, I was in Florida and found that the whole Judas plan had disintegrated. The main reason for it was to have something ready in case it was needed for a spectacular to give the American people the feeling that its government had finally liquidated Fidel Castro and then would go out and re-elect the current administration. This whole operation is very involved, would require hours to explain. It was dubbed by many the Judas plan because Judas was the apostle who betrayed his Lord. So, let's go on to the next point.

11. Ray floundered and was caught on Cay Anguila, in the Bahamas, a British possession, and as we all know he was fined for something or other and let loose. Since that time we haven't heard much except that he keeps going in and out of Puerto Rico, Miami, etc., but he is laying low. As far as the Cubans are concerned, he's finished. Let me say as a little sideline to the Ray situation: In a secret meeting in Los Angeles, Jose Estevez, the JURE delegate, took an oath that Ray was already in Cuba. Later, when Ray was discovered in Cay Anguila, Estevez told his own executive group he had lied so that they would not lose their enthusiasm. The people who had been with Ray in Los Angeles told Estevez that if lying was a way of life for JURE they would back out, that they had left Cuba because Castro had lied to them, and that they were not going to take any more lies from anybody. This was the end of JURE and I have their document which is extremely interesting, but this is unimportant now.

12. Now, let's take a quick look at Manuel Artime. In the opinion of 95% of the Cubans that consider themselves in the "know", Artime is a puppet, attached to the strings of the CIA. He's fed, clothed and maneuvered by CIA to its wish and nothing else. This is a general consensus in all Cuban circles, so Artime is not taken seriously. Artime, however, is a very interesting person, he's a good speaker, and nice-looking, but I consider his thinking very much along the lines of Fascism. When he travels he takes several of his strong looking friends along, and when he speaks in public places they seem to watch the corners, and look very nasty with their insignias and all. I had the pleasure of asking Artime when he addressed the prestigious Association for the Economic Reconstruction of Cuba in Miami in March 1964, if he was sure that he was not being used as a puppet for elements in the American Government that

14-00000
Enclosure to
LA-2/4-65
5 April 1965

wanted to keep Cuba as a showplace in America to prove to the rest of America how bad Communism was. This was one of the theories making the rounds in Washington, i.e., the horrible example. To my surprise and to his, there was tremendous applause. I've got that on tape too. I asked Artine if he was not a traitor to his country. He told me that a man who had been condemned to death and been in prison for two years was hard to deceive, which was not an answer. But it sounded very nice and I didn't insist. Anyway, Artine at this time -- we're talking now on March 24, 1965 -- I hear, has just completely dismantled his operation. Since the unpleasantness in Costa Rica which supposedly had to do with some contraband activities that involved the brother of President Orlich of Costa Rica himself, Artine's group has been dismantled. Most of his people are now involved in another operation developing around Miami and said to be backed by the CIA or the Pentagon -- I don't know which. When I was in Miami in January and February 1965, I found that there were two groups of Americans handling Cubans. The CIA people who were handling one kind of Cubans and then the Pentagon, apparently, was maneuvering another group. I really don't know how much truth there is to this. I was told that the Pentagon people were at odds with CIA and that they were going to try and get their own group of Cubans just to show CIA how it should be done. Artine's people have gone to a group supposedly handled either by the Pentagon or by CIA.

13. There is another thing that I just found out in the last week. Most of the people who were getting checks from CIA through its different devices had been fired and that there was a panic around Miami. These people who had been living and bringing up their families with CIA checks were suddenly left out in the cold. I don't know how much truth there is in this either. I don't know what Artine is doing now although I talked to a relative of one of Artine's close associates who told me today that there is a very large move by the American Government inside of Cuba. In other words, the ideas of invasions or hit and run, and all that seem to be passe. Now the big thing is the assassination of Castro and the insurrection inside Cuba by people who are discontent, that is, the Castro followers the CIA has been able to reach. I understand there has been a tremendous amount of work done in the last two years by American agencies, and tremendous files compiled of who in Cuba could be counted upon at certain times for certain things.

14. This is fine and dandy and who knows, maybe tomorrow we will hear that Castro has been assassinated and that the CIA plan has already done what it is expected to do. I have only public information and am

14-00000
Enclosure to
LA-254-65
5 April 1965

not privy to any secrets either in the American agencies or in the Cuban higher echelons -- so, I don't know, I just hear rumors.

15. The next thing that kind of blew the air out of the Cuban exiles was the arrest of Menoyo of the Alpha 66, etc., group. Menoyo, in the opinion of many Cubans, is a political gangster and a double-dealer. He has the confidence only of his own small group of followers. Menoyo, from what I have been told, jumped the gun on something else that was being prepared. His going into Cuba with three other men sounds pretty stupid unless Menoyo suspected or was told that the big inside push which is called La Onda Americana, the American Wave, was imminent, and he jumped the gun so that he could get lined up before anybody else and take over the government. In my book Menoyo is not terribly important and does not have much of a following. He has a few nice guys, but they're on the fringe of being crackpots and dreamers, not bad, but mixed up in their minds and hungry for power. They call themselves revolutionaries but instinctively fear anything that has a democratic process. They want to take Cuba at the point of a gun and keep it that way. So Menoyo's capture is another blow to the Cuban exiles. Even if they didn't like him, they said, "If Menoyo opens up a beachhead in Cuba, 'Viva Menoyo'! we will go and fight with him!"

16. So we leave Menoyo in his peaceful prison in Havana and go to the last and saddest of the Cuban disasters in the exile movement -- that is the complete flop of the RECE, the Representation of Cuban Exiles. As you know, I was deeply involved in the formation of this organization because I believed it had a chance. The quality of the men behind this idea were top people, most of whom I knew by first name, others I had grown up with. The central figure, Jose Bosch, head of the Bacardi Company, commands respect and is a patriot. However, RECE disintegrated a couple of weeks ago. It might interest you to know that on 9 Jun 64, a few weeks after the referendum was completed, I wrote a confidential, private letter to Dr. Ernesto Freyre, who was one of the five men appointed by the committee and approved by a referendum of over 40 thousand Cubans. I told Dr. Freyre, my old and personal friend, what, in my opinion, they should do to make RECE successful. I told him that the first thing was to ignore Washington completely. I said, "I don't have anything against the Americans -- but right now you head an organization that has the approval of 90% of the Cuban exiles. Use this moral support you have and try to create a real Cuban outfit. If you do, you'll get the backing of the Bacardi Company and the million dollars it offered at the start. Use it judiciously

14-00000
Enclosure to
LA-294-65
5 April 1965

and create a strong, well-knit Cuban organization and don't ask anything from the Americans. Ask the Cuban people for contributions; there are over a hundred thousand working in the US. At \$5.00 a month, which they could easily pay, you would have half a million dollars a month to work with. You can do a lot with a half a million dollars a month." But above all (I continue my letter from memory), don't go to Washington, just act as if the US Government did not exist. If somebody comes to the office and wants to know what you're doing, treat them courteously and give them all the information they want as far as the operation of the outfit. We are living in the US and I think that any American official is entitled to know what is going on. But as far as our own private plans for the liberation of Cuba, they belong to the Cubans at this time. Then, I told Dr. Freyre, if you do this, you will then be able to deal with the US Government on a completely different basis, not with your hat in your hand. But if you have the solid backing of half a million Cubans throughout the world you will command the respect not only of the American Government but also of the other countries of Latin America. I told him I thought the RECE should evolve into a government in exile because that would be the logical thing, and the only type of organization people would understand. What did they do? They scooted down to Latin America with no support except their 40 thousand votes, they talked to people in Latin America. Everybody promised them the sky but with one condition -- that Uncle Sam approve. Then they went to Washington and found out that Uncle Sam did not approve. After nine months they blew up last week and threw in the towel. Two delegates resigned and the other three said that they would do some housekeeping until they saw what happened.

17. Before leaving the RECE in its peaceful grave I think I should mention that I had gone all through the process of the referendum itself, and after the RECE was formed I was the delegate in Los Angeles. After the referendum was completed I helped get four other delegates so that we would have five delegates which like the delegations throughout their country, and in Mexico City, Caracas, etc., duplicated the original group of five. In November I resigned because I could not get answers to a list of questions -- answers for which I thought I was justified in asking -- i.e., regarding its finances, activities, successes, prospects, etc. That takes care of the RECE.

18. So now, we've reached the moment of truth. All these things have gone down the drain. During my recent visit to Miami there was one last hope which seemed still alive. I was told several times by these people that there is something very, very big being worked out

14-00000
Enclosure to
IA-224-65
5 April 1965

by the US agencies, that this very, very big thing is imminent, that it is based exclusively on an internal uprising and perhaps the possibility of the assassination of Castro as a kickoff. Two days ago I received a communication from a person who is close to US Government people in Miami, representatives of the State Department, and also CIA people. He said that we should be patient, that the end is not far away and that the so-called Onda Americana is going to solve the problem. In other words, whatever organization is working on the Cuban problem apparently is on the verge of giving the word to whomever is inside Cuba connected with this operation. I have little hope that this may be true. After five years, I have no reason to believe that circumstances at this time are different than two or three years ago. Of course, I have to recognize that the Johnson administration is not the same as the Kennedy administration, as witness the lack of hesitation in the Vietnam situation. It may interest you to know that a group of Cubans from REGE recently in Washington were told by important people in no uncertain terms that the Cuban problem is certainly not top drawer right now, but second, third or fourth. The top drawer is Vietnam and that once Vietnam is solved one way or another, perhaps the Cuban situation would be moved up to the forefront, if no other area of the world flares up.

19. So, this is the situation that brings us right down to the point which I wanted to discuss with you in detail -- the formation of a Cuban Government in Exile as the only possible solution to move the Cuban situation off dead center, whether the US Government is willing at this time to help or not. We feel that the creation of a Cuban Government in Exile, if done right and has the moral authority and the solid backing of the Cuban exiles, could possibly create a situation where, without having to risk any American lives, the Cuban problem and the Communist threat in Cuba could be eliminated without danger of World War III, or escalation, or anybody dropping the famous bomb in New York or Washington. I am going to tell you why a group of people, including myself, believe very strongly that this government in exile should be made as soon as possible, and as well as possible. And the fact that if it were a fait accompli it would create some drastic changes in the thinking of the State Department regarding a Cuban Government in Exile.

20. The beginning of the idea of a government in exile started at an OAS meeting in Washington in July 1964 when Dr. Prio and Dr. Marquez Sterling capitalized on their personal, old friendships with the present Secretary of State of Brazil, Vasco Leitao Da Cunha, and also the ex-ambassador of Argentina, Julio Amoedo, to further

14-00000
Enclosure to
LA-294-65
5 April 1965

these ideas. Both the latter had been ambassadors to Cuba during the Prio regime and there were strong ties between them. At the time of this conference in July 1964, apparently Prio convinced Leitao and Amoedo that the idea of a Cuban Government in Exile would be a solution to the Cuban problem. Brazil still had fresh in its mind the horrible scare of going Communist, and Leitao is strongly anti-Communist. He offered Prio a place to gather in Brazil for most of the Cuban leaders (and he knew them all). The list of people to be invited to Brazil contained all the top leaders in exile. I can give you their names but I think it would be just academic because the gathering did not take place. This proposal created tremendous excitement among the Cuban exiles and of course Prio mentioned it as the basis for his enthusiasm in creating a government in exile. Dr. Prio felt that if Brazil, which is the largest nation in Latin America, and the most popular with the US, especially now that it has a friendly government, would recognize the Cuban Government in Exile and give it a temporary home there that this would persuade the US to cooperate in some way or another. The fact is that recently the Brazilian authorities turned down Dr. Prio, much to his sorrow. The information I have is that there were some very strong pressures exerted by the State Department on the Brazilian Government against the idea of cooperating with Dr. Prio or any of his friends, in creating a Cuban Government in Exile. Just a few days ago in Miami, Mr. Leitao told Dr. Prio, and this is very reliable inside information, that if he had gone ahead with the original plans of inviting Prio and other Cubans to Brazil, he might have lost his job.

21. Incidentally, yesterday I had a very interesting tidbit which I don't know is true or not. Perhaps tomorrow it will be all academic, but I was told that Prio and Leitao would have one last secret meeting in Houston, Texas, where Mrs. Leitao is taking some kind of medical treatment. So perhaps this is not completely dead yet or maybe Leitao wants to appear as trying to insist some more -- I don't know, but it is interesting.

22. Anyway, after the Brazilian turn-down, the Miami leadership was staggered. No one knew what to do next or whom to talk to. Apparently the Cuban leaders felt that unless they had the support of a Latin American country they would not be able to go ahead with their government in exile idea.

14-00000
Enclosure to
LA-294-65
5 April 1965

23. As a result of something that happened more recently, I have real hopes. In the last few days, perhaps you have heard, there was an unbelievable plebiscite held in Miami first, then in Los Angeles, and then in New York and Puerto Rico, in which people were just invited by a committee of women to come to certain places and express themselves on a little card on whether they wanted a government in exile to be formed. Well, the reaction was unbelievable. I gave out only two small announcements on my radio program, and we had almost 5000 people come to Hollywood and Vine on a rainy, cold afternoon to deposit their little postcards saying "We want a government in exile." Miami had close to 50 thousand do the same. New York had over 50 thousand people. Puerto Rico had another 10 or 15 thousand. In other words, it was a spontaneous, legitimate reaction of the Cuban public in favor of having some kind of an organization to represent them in their exile.

24. As a result of this informal plebiscite, we've resolved in Los Angeles to ignore the impasse that had come about in the leadership in Miami, to ignore the difficulties and complications and all the things that people told us would be impossible in having a government in exile without the support of the US, and go ahead. And this is the main reason for my visit with you tonight. The idea, incidentally, of a government in exile may raise some hackles in the State Department but from a purely legal point of view, I feel, and I have no reason to believe the contrary, that the Cubans in exile here are not violating any law of the US -- federal, state or local -- because what they are doing at this time is running an election to determine the opinion of 200 thousand-300 thousand people as to whom they think should take over the leadership of the exiles. Until such time as those elected declare themselves a government in exile there would be no conflict with US laws. Perhaps at that time, once these people are elected and accept the election, they can then discuss this point with the State Department. If the State Department tells them that if they declare themselves a government in exile that they're going to jail, then all they have to do is find out if Costa Rica will take them, or El Salvador, or Brazil, or whatever. Of course, they and we know that most of these countries are strongly dependent upon US aid and loans, and so forth, for their operation and there is no doubt in my mind that it is going to take a little persuasion to get a Latin American country to defy the US and give this government in exile a piece of land and recognition. But there is an alternative which we have considered and this is that these men who will be elected in this process do not necessarily have to declare themselves a government

14-00000
Enclosure to
LA-294-65
5 April 1965

in exile. They could declare themselves to be some kind of a leadership junta, or a preparatory committee or whatever, to avoid any legal problems with the State Department of the US.

25. There has been -- I believe I mentioned it before -- a tremendous amount of floundering by the leaders in Miami after the Brazilian denial of a meeting place in Rio de Janeiro and a group of us in California, and frankly I have been the prime instigator in this, have decided not to wait for the people in Miami, but to go ahead and start an election in California to see how it works out. I can assure you that in the planning of this whole election there have been no participants except a number of us Cubans all of whom I think are in good faith and who may not be leaders but are intelligent and well meaning. So, we decided to start here in California where, incidentally, the passions of politics are not as vehement. In Miami, the people are intense in their political passions and their brains are clouded. For instance, about five or six days ago, I called Dr. Eduardo Suarez Grivas, who is the power behind Frio's political machinery. All the meetings are held in his house and he is the real brains of this whole thing. This man was a Cuban senator for some 18 years and one of the most active in passing good, progressive legislation. I consider him one of the most brilliant men in the political strata of Miami. I talked to him for half an hour on the phone, had to let him know what we were planning and to ask him if there was any possibility of our endangering something that would be good for Cuba because, if so, we wouldn't do it. Our objective is the liberation of Cuba, if our move here could possibly upset something else, we would refrain. He asked me to wait a few days because something was going on but I learned from other sources that the situation down there was almost chaotic so we're going ahead.

26. Now, what are we going to do? Well, this is the story; we call it the California Plan. We are going to hold an election on April 25th -- that's about four weeks from now roughly -- that will give us plenty of time. The mechanics are these: We will invite every Cuban in the Los Angeles area to come to one of 15 to 25 predetermined polling places throughout the city and surrounding areas where we know that there are a number of Cubans. We think that we will be able to use the International Institute on Boyle Street, the CYO building in East Los Angeles, several churches, including the Blessed Sacrament here in Hollywood, a number of Masonic temples, the Knights of Columbus hall downtown at Bonnie Brae and Ninth, and a number of business places. For instance, there are about five Cuban restaurants we will turn into polling places, a few stores, shops, and gas stations owned and operated

14-00000
V
Enclosure to
IA-294-65
5 April 1965

by Cubans. The polls will be open from 0900 to 1500, Sunday, April 25th.

27. In each polling place there will be a looseleaf register on which the person coming in to vote will put his name, his signature, his address, telephone, and then his identification, which will be checked. We will accept Cuban passports, valid or not, Immigration cards, and driver's licenses, plus whatever other identification is approved by the voting committee. We will meet Saturday [27 Mar 65] with six ex-magistrates of the Cuban courts who have had electoral experience. They will give us guidance on how to do this properly. After the person identifies himself and registers we will give him a ballot to mark in private. Either from his memory, or from an information sheet available he will vote for a president, a vice-president and for perhaps as few as 15 or as many as 25 members of an advisory council. The number has not yet been determined. The advisory council would have certain veto powers over the President, as we do not want another dictator. There will be another area on the ballot for a regional representative of each city that has more than five thousand Cuban residents.

28. When the people mark their ballots and drop them into the ballot box we will solicit whatever financial help they can afford to defray this election expense, which will approximate \$2,000. We will try as far as possible to have a former member of the Cuban judiciary at each polling place, along with one or two members of the 2506th Brigade on guard. We will try to get the cooperation of the city in providing us with police. At 1500 we will seal the ballot boxes and try to have the city or some similar authority impound them so that they will be out of the hands of Cubans until they are properly counted. This may be a little shameful but we don't want anyone in Miami or any place to say that these elections were fraudulent because we handled the ballots.

29. To help keep the election clean we will stamp the hand of the voter with a special ink of the type used at race tracks and places of amusement. This ink only shows when put under black or ultraviolet light. Having once cast a ballot, they will be unable to vote again in any other place because they will be marked. That is one way of keeping it clean.

30. Eligibles will include every Cuban over 18 or 21 -- we have not decided the age yet. We would like to keep as close as possible to the age provided in the 1940 constitution of Cuba, so whatever the constitution says, that's what we're going to abide by.

14-00000
Enclosure to
LA-294-65
5 April 1965

31. To help people's memories we will provide with each ballot a separate sheet containing approximately 100 names with a brief biography of each person, each of whom has taken part in various activities during the six years of exile. They will be from every side of the political fence. If voters want to have someone who is not on this list, it is their privilege. This is a free and independent popular expression or election, if you want to call it that. Perhaps in about a week or so we will buy a full-page in La Opinion [Spanish-language daily in Los Angeles] and explain the whole procedure. Also, we're going to keep a barrage of radio announcements going, explaining to the Cuban people the importance of the election, giving out the names, doing everything possible to create enthusiasm for these elections.

32. Now, this is going to shock many people in New York and Miami, but we want to shock them because they don't seem to be doing anything at all. If, between now and the 25th of April, they get their heads together and do something similar, fine. All we want to do is get the ball rolling. Hopefully, they will do something similar.

33. Incidentally, I should mention that we are going to try in the next week, after we get everything straightened out, to contact someone in the larger US cities, Mexico City, Puerto Rico, Caracas, Madrid and Santa Domingo, which are big centers of Cuban exiles, and all the Central American republics. We're going to try to encourage elections simultaneously in each of these countries and in every city of the US. If we are capable in the next four weeks to get the ball rolling in all these centers of Cubans, then we will count the ballots that same day. If we can only have our own elections in the Western states on the 25th of April, then we will place the sealed ballot boxes in safe-keeping and wait until the other cities have held their elections and then do the counting the same day. Otherwise, we might destroy the whole election if we indicated California's preferences.

34. Now, let's suppose that the elections have come off beautifully throughout the whole world, with expressions from 200 to 300 thousand Cubans. What happens next? Well, those who have been elected are going to have to act because they have received a mandate I am sure they will regard very carefully. I can tell you now that the people elected who do not accept this mandate had better forget about going back to Cuba. The

14-00000
Enclosure to
IA-294-65
5 April 1965

next move is this: These people are going to have to decide how they're going to operate, and perhaps get in touch with the US State Department to determine what is and what is not legal. Perhaps they may have to go to a Central American country, perhaps to Panama, who knows? But the most important thing that I want you to know is that we are going to submit to the government of exiles or in exile a master plan for the liberation of Cuba.

35. This master plan is simple and we believe strongly in it. This government in exile or of exiles would have such tremendous authority with the backing of perhaps 300 thousand Cubans that it would be strong enough to overcome the fears of the State Department. We believe that the American people would endorse this exercise of democracy right in their own yard by people who want to liberate their own country. I think that the people of the US, if properly informed, would probably want their government to help. I don't think that the people of the US would tolerate any opposition from the State Department unless it could prove that this was bad for the US. Knowing the influence of American public opinion, we feel that this step will actually change the thinking of the people in State who at this time may be opposed to this idea.

36. Now, if we are able to alter the thinking of the State Department so that it will not oppose whatever Latin American countries may be disposed to help the exile movement, then we come to the final stage of our thinking and our reason for creating this government of exiles in exile. The final stage is simply this. The government of exiles or in exile, or at least its President and its equivalent of Secretary of State, perhaps, should visit each of the heads of government of the following republics: Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Costa Rica, Panama, Colombia, Venezuela, Dominican Republic, and the free associated State of Puerto Rico. The exile group should discuss with the heads of these 10 Caribbean countries a plan for organizing in each an army or a brigade which hopefully would be composed of three elements: Cubans, local citizenry and local military men.

37. The Cubans of military age would come from all over to get military training at bases provided in one of these 10 countries. We think that the Cuban element would number approximately 50 thousand Cubans of military age who would be distributed throughout these 10 countries. Then we would have the local citizenry, the youth of these 10 countries, who would like to participate in this Army of the Caribbean, not to fight Castro for the sake of the Cubans, but for their own safety and for their own countries. Castro has proven himself a menace to the internal security of every country in the Caribbean -- Venezuela is the

14-00000
Enclosure to
IA-294-65
5 April 1965

most glaring example. The youngsters in these countries, with a sense of patriotism and adventure, should provide another 50 thousand men to be trained with the Cubans in this ring of steel around the Caribbean. Then, the most important part of this army of liberation in the Caribbean would be volunteers from the regular army of each of these countries provided we could work things out with their own governments so that they would not lose either their citizenship, position or reputation by reason of volunteering for this army of the Caribbean.

38. Now come the big questions -- Who is going to pay for all this? Who is going to supply the ammunition? Or the military hardware? Or the armada necessary for an invasion of Cuba by an army that may have between 150 thousand and 200 thousand men. We believe that the Cuban Government of exiles or in exile can make arrangements with each of these countries to provide bases, military facilities, training areas, military advisors, food, and housing for that part of the liberation force in that country. If one or another country is not financially able to do this I am sure that once the army begins to form, the bases working and the training started, there would be a move throughout all of America, north, central and south, to raise funds for Cuba's liberation. I'm sure that millions would be available.

39. The next question is military hardware. I'm afraid Uncle Sam, directly or indirectly, is the only source of supply that we can look to. We would like to keep Uncle Sam out of any international involvement and let this be essentially a movement by Latin Americans for Latin American purposes. However, there should be nothing to keep the US from supplying these legitimate governments with whatever arms they request. The latter, in turn, could make these arms available to the brigades being trained in each country. I believe the US Government is as anxious to eradicate Communism from America as it is from Southeast Asia, and certainly, it can find a way to supply hardware to these 10 inter-American armies within completely normal inter-government transactions. There need be no direct contact between the US Government and the Cuban exiles.

40. Once this army is trained there's always the possibility Castro might be assassinated, or other American plans might be put into operation, or if the Cubans inside of Cuba do it themselves, well, then the battle is won. In that happy event, we will dismantle this operation and return to Cuba. If none of these things happen, and the army goes ahead, then the way I see it is this. I don't honestly think that this army of liberation will ever have

14-00000
Enclosure to
LA-294-65
5 April 1965

land in Cuba as an invading army. I believe that when this army is ready to pounce, the people around Castro will tell him they don't think they should be there any longer. Then we'll see either Castro fly out of Cuba or have his head blown off by his own men, most of whom would rather be heroes of the revolution and save what they can. In my opinion, this would end the affair, but if it doesn't, then the army of liberation will have to invade Cuba and go all-out. This is the way I see it and this is about the end of it.

41. I think I should point out at this stage that the elections we are preparing are completely different from the ones conducted for RECE. The RECE plan presented a package of five men to the Cuban people on a take-it-or-leave-it basis and I think many people resented this. There were no alternatives. Ours is different. Ours is a completely blank ballot. The voter can choose anyone he wants, even his mother-in-law. So I think the people will react favorably.

42. I think before ending I would like you to hear the words of Dean Rusk when he spoke at a Los Angeles World Affairs Council luncheon at the Beverly Hilton Hotel on Sept. 18, 1964. I asked him from the floor if the State Department was grooming RECE for a government in exile. At that time I really thought this was happening since RECE people had been so secretive about their activities in Washington. Rusk said,

"Well, I don't want to probe the future unduly in this current situation but there are some tough problems about a government in exile that we should keep in mind. In the first place, Cubans outside of Cuba have not been strongly united and there are a considerable number of divergent groups, and my understanding is that they have not yet been able to come together with the degree of solidarity that would speak with authority on such a point. Then one must bear in mind also the attitude of the people who remain in Cuba and what their attitude toward such leaders might be. Nor what would be their role to play in any future development on the island. Third, I would like to emphasize that it is of the greatest importance to us to deal with the Cuban question on as broad a hemispheric basis as possible. We made great strides in the last year or two in moving in

14-00000
Enclosure to
LA-294-65
5 April 1965

that direction. I've already commented on that earlier today. And there is considerable suspicion, frankly, throughout Latin America about things called governments in exile. Of course, far from the Cuban question, this idea appears to many of us to be an instrument which might lend itself to intimations of other sorts and other places at other times. And so there's considerable sensitivity about governments in exile in the hemisphere. I personally would not think there would be great advantage in our recognizing a government in exile if we were the only ones to do so."

43. These are the words of Secretary of State, Dean Rusk, regarding governments in exile in general and a Cuban government in exile, in particular. As we can see, the Secretary of State does not express ideas that are contrary to those we have expressed in this conversation we've had today with you. There are several points in Dean Rusk's conversation that lead me to think that if the Cuban government in exile is prepared in accordance with the plan of elections we have outlined earlier, there is a very strong possibility that the State Department would change its present attitude and not only accept the possibility of a government in exile but even recognize it under the proper circumstances. If seven, or eight, or 10 nations, in the Caribbean or Argentina and Brazil decide to recognize this government, there's no reason why the State Department could not change its present negative attitude.

44. Naturally, there are many questions left unanswered in this conversation but I would be very happy to answer any further questions that you or the people that are associated with you may have. Before I finish I just want to express my strong feelings that the cause of the Cuban exiles and the security of the US are parallel, although there might be some divergent points in procedure of international consequences. But I am going ahead with this election in California with the hope that it will help create a Cuban government of exiles or in exile, whichever is the final wording, and it will be for the future security of this country, as well as the liberation of Cuba. With these words, I would like to close this chat and thank you for your attention.

[~~END~~; ~~RE~~ Do not fail to see Para. 5 thru 8 of accompanying memo.]

- end -

